



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA AMENDS REGULATIONS REGARDING THE INTERSTATE MOVEMENT OF SHEEP AND GOATS

WASHINGTON, March 31, 2009--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is amending its regulations regarding the interstate movement of animals to require APHIS approval of livestock facilities that handle sheep and goats in interstate commerce.

This includes stockyards, livestock markets, buying stations, concentration points or any other premises where sheep and goats are assembled for interstate commerce.

Under this final rule, facility operators must meet certain minimum standards and other conditions related to the receipt, handling and release of sheep and goats at the facility. In order to receive APHIS approval, they must also comply with certain animal identification and recordkeeping requirements.

These standards and conditions are based on existing APHIS regulations related to interstate movement of sheep and goats in order to prevent the spread of scrapie, a fatal, degenerative disease that affects the central nervous system of sheep and goats.

This final rule is scheduled for publication in the April 1 *Federal Register* and becomes effective May 1.

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